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## Economic Development

The City of West Saint Paul has identified economic development as a priority issue in its comprehensive planning process. The City first created the Economic Development Commission in 1988 which was established as an advisory group. The EDC since changed to the Economic Development Authority, EDA) consisting of members of the city council.



### Implementation Strategies

The clarification and establishment of goals are based on an understanding of existing conditions in the community and the surrounding area by the Planning Commission and City Council. To further these goals, the City created an Economic Development Authority. These goals are supported by a series of objectives structured to meet annual work programs. The annual work programs are composed of activities with workable strategies or policies and projected results. The proposed activities require the City to take an advocate position on commercial and industrial expansion, business retention as well as recommending general locational placement of new development activities. The 2008 strategic plan for the City's economic development programs includes the following:

#### Commercial Redevelopment

1. Continue to implement the Robert Street Renaissance Plan.
2. Support development/redevelopment of the Signal Hills Mall
3. Support development/redevelopment of the Smith and Dodd area
4. Support development/redevelopment of the Block 900 area
5. Support development/redevelopment of the 10 Acres Mall
6. Promote development opportunities to business owners and managers

#### Office/Industrial Development

1. Identify key parcels for development and redevelopment
2. Develop a systematic business retention program
3. Encourage higher-wage industries to locate in the City

## **Financing Redevelopment**

1. Continue to use available financial tools, including Tax Increment Financing to encourage redevelopment and investment
2. Pursue outside funding resources

## **Regulation and Enforcement**

1. Understand and address concerns expressed by businesses and citizens of the community
2. Maintain Rental License Program
3. Maintain Housing Programs
4. Maintain Pace/Case Programs
5. Revise Zoning Ordinance as needed
6. Revise Zoning Map
7. Maintain list of problem properties and foreclosures

## **Business Involvement and Organization**

The City will continue to encourage involvement and utilize the expertise and creativity of the four business organizations in the City to help achieve its economic and employment goals. These four are: West Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, South Robert Street Business Association, Signal Hills Merchants Association, and Smith-Dodd Business Association. The City continues to be an active participant in the Dakota County Economic Development Partnership program.

# 10 Intergovernmental Cooperation

West Saint Paul has a history of cooperation with adjacent communities that bridge the decades of early development along the Mississippi River. Cooperative agreements have existed for many years with Saint Paul, South Saint Paul, Lilydale and Mendota. In more recent years, developing communities such as Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights and Sunfish Lake have become working partners with West Saint Paul. For example, Saint Paul Water Utility provides the public water supply for the City. Inver Grove Heights works with the City on a variety of recreational programs, including fieldtrips, safety camp and Special Olympics. West Saint Paul has mutual aid agreements in police services with Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights and South Saint Paul and has consolidated fire services with South Saint Paul known as South Metro Fire Services. These agreements are as simple as municipal agreements between cities and as formal as joint power agreements. In 2008, the City entered into a joint powers agreement to establish a county-wide 800MHz 911 dispatching center.



Dakota County has a regional park, trails and County roads in the City. The State of Minnesota has highway right-of-way in and through the City. The City will continue to explore cost efficient ways to provide local citizens the highest quality services through mutual agreements and projects with adjacent communities and governmental organizations.

**TABLE 22 - INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

	Police Direct	Fire-Police Mutual Aid	Dispatch	Sewer	Water	Recreation
Inver Grove Heights		X				X
Mendota Heights		X				X
Saint Paul				X	X	
South Saint Paul		X				X
Sunfish Lake	X					
Dakota County			X			X



# 11 Implementation

The development and redevelopment of West Saint Paul has been guided by a Comprehensive Plan since 1963 when the City's first plan was adopted. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances were enacted the same year to help implement the plan. Since then, the zoning Ordinance and Map have been most recently amended in 2008 to keep pace with changing conditions and zoning techniques.

The City is 99% built and the focus is now on redevelopment. Recent amendments have accommodated mixed use, condominium and townhouse developments. The few changes that may occur in the future would involve redevelopment of areas at a higher use and density, most likely tied to specific development plans. Development plans shall contain provisions that culminate in multi-use, walkable, livable communities such as:

- Protected historical resources
- Solar shading
- Dark sky lighting
- Pedestrian oriented to design lots
- Zone appropriate architecture
- Green Construction
- Green approaches to water
- Energy efficiency standards
- Green common spaces
- Green approach to yard waste disposal
- Green infrastructure
- Green maintenance/repair standards
- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels and cisterns
- Green roofs
- Green approaches to waste water management
- Multimodal transportation opportunities
- Storm water maintenance
- Utility easements

The following official controls will be utilized by the City of West Saint Paul to implement the goals and policies of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update:



## **Robert Street “Renaissance Plan”**

In 2001, the City adopted the Robert Street Renaissance Plan in an effort to shape Robert Street’s future in a sustainable, livable and economically viable manner that is responsive to the community’s vision for the corridor. The four primary goals of the plan are as follows:

- Reinforce South Robert Street’s historical role as the Main Street of West Saint Paul, the focus of community activities and the primary link with surrounding cities.
- Create a sustainable environment for all who live, work and recreate in West Saint Paul by fostering a compact mix of uses, introducing adaptable building types, and improving the corridor’s image and connectivity.
- Improve the sense of continuity throughout the corridor, while at the same time recognizing the distinct character districts.
- Improve the livability of the corridor by providing for a mix of uses, supporting transit and cyclists, and balancing the functional needs of traffic with a comfortable pedestrian environment.

In 2008/2009, the City formed a Committee to review the plan and provide recommendations to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and City Council. The Committee determined that the plan remains a viable planning tool for the redevelopment of Robert Street. In addition, the Committee was encouraged by the steps that have been taken since the plan was adopted. The primary recommendation of the committee was to pursue federal funding (Surface Transportation Program) for a complete reconstruction of the Robert Street corridor as outlined in the plan, including the installation of center medians, streetscaping, bike/pedestrian improvements, elimination of access points and accommodation for the possibility of expanded transit options. A copy of the Robert Street Renaissance Plan is included in the appendix.

## **Subdivision Ordinance**

The City’s Subdivision Ordinance has changed very little since it was implemented in 1963. With more and more focus on street-scaping improvements, and generating funds for development impacts such as park dedication fees, the subdivision ordinance may need to be changed in the future if the City desires to place less impact on general funds. This is a delicate balance, as the intent is for major subdivisions to pay for their impacts on other systems, not to discourage redevelopment. The City is in the process of reviewing the Subdivision Ordinance and anticipates a complete update within two years. A copy of the existing Subdivision Ordinance is included in the appendix



## **Zoning Ordinance**

The City completed a revision of its Zoning Ordinance in 1998. The new Zoning Ordinance coordinates the zoning and planning maps as well as consolidating amendments, revisions and changes that have occurred over the past decade. The City continually examines the Zoning Ordinance for its applicability and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the City. In recent years several amendments have been approved in accordance with the “Renaissance Plan,” including the addition of a commercial site plan review, changes to the sign code, auto-uses, and medical uses, as well as changes to the parking and setback requirements. The Zoning Ordinance is the City’s primary tool in guiding the redevelopment of property in the community. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will be made as necessary to carry out plan policies. A current copy of the City’s Zoning Ordinance is included in the appendix.

## **Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)**

The City’s Zoning Ordinance allows for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). The primary purpose of utilizing planned development districts for guiding new developments is to place emphasis upon a more flexible regulatory process as compared to rather rigid development regulations common to traditional zoning districts. The Planned Development process provides for a joint planning/design effort by developers and City officials rather than the City establishing maximum limits within which developers may perform.

Benefits resulting from a regulatory process include an opportunity to protect and preserve valuable natural resources and amenities, and to assure a higher quality environment.

## **Site Plan Review**

In 2005, the City adopted Ordinance language (within the Zoning Code) requiring Council review of Commercial and Industrial redevelopment as well as Residential redevelopment (except for single family and two family dwellings). The adopted language identifies minimum requirements for Site design, building and parking setbacks, landscaping, lighting, and building façade. The process also notifies the public allowing for public comment. In addition, all redevelopment along Robert Street includes Mn/DOT review. As development trends and policies continue to evolve, the City will continue to utilize the site plan process to properly guide future redevelopment.

## **Capital Improvement Program**

Since West Saint Paul is almost fully developed, it does not face the problems of urbanizing areas relative to construction and installation of public improvements to serve growth areas. For the most part, West Saint Paul's public support systems and facilities are complete. The primary activity in the years ahead will be maintenance of the facilities as opposed to construction. The only area where significant capital expenditures will be required during the next five years is for storm water management, park development and street construction. Previously scheduled projects are also reviewed to make sure they still fit with the City's plans. Currently, the City does not have a 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). However, the City is anticipating the development of a 5-year CIP plan within the next two years.

In lieu of a 5-year CIP, the following budget and expenditure information is provided for storm water management, park development and street construction (water supply is handled by St. Paul Water):

### **Storm Water Management**

West Saint Paul annually budgets \$100k-\$120k in expenses for Storm Water Improvement Projects. This includes storm sewer upsizing and small storm water improvement projects. This amount is funded annually through the City's Storm Water Utility Fund.

### **Park Development**

West Saint Paul annually budgets approximately \$100k in expenses for Park Capital Improvements. This includes replacement of play structures, ball field improvements, and small trail improvement projects. This amount is funded annually through the City's Park Dedication Fund and general tax levy. For major improvements, the City anticipates Park Referendums to upgrade the City's existing parklands.

### **Street Improvements**

West Saint Paul annually budgets \$1.5M-\$2.0M in expenses for Street Improvement Projects. This includes public street and alley improvement projects throughout the City. This amount is funded through a bi-annual bond levy that the City issues.

## **Local Surface Water Management Plan**

The recently approved (2006) Local Surface Water Management Plan will serve as the comprehensive planning document to guide the City in conserving, protecting, and managing its surface water resources. The plan is an update to the 1991 Municipal Water Resources Management Plan. The new plan meets the requirements as established in Minnesota Rules 8419. In addition, the plan reflects the requirements of the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization, which has jurisdiction within the City. Meeting watershed requirements ensures the City's compliance with local and regional expectations. A copy of the Local Surface Water Management Plan is included in the appendix.



# A ppendix

1. Community Input SWOT Analysis Results
2. Community Input Survey Results
3. Implementation Plan for Quality Housing, Advance Resources for Development, Inc.
4. Local Surface Water Management Plan
5. Infill & Infiltration Ordinance
6. Robert Street Renaissance Plan
7. Zoning Ordinance & Map
8. Subdivision Ordinance